

UPDATE ON FLOODPLAIN REMAPPING PROJECT FOR SALINA AND SALINE COUNTY

**BY DEAN ANDREW
FLOOD PLAIN ADMINISTRATOR**

May 5, 2016

The City's Flood Hazard Boundary (FHBM) Maps and Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) which are used by staff to determine which properties are subject to local floodplain regulations and used by lenders to determine which loans require flood insurance were published in 1986 and have not been updated since that time. Because the maps are based on the city's 1986 boundaries, numerous subdivisions that have been added to the city are not shown on the floodplain maps.

In 2007, FEMA embarked on a Flood Map Modernization program, a five-year effort to update the nation's flood hazard maps. The program's goal is to transform the way flood maps are created and accessed by providing flood maps and data for communities nationwide that are more accurate, easier-to-use, and readily available. Because Salina's maps are so outdated and because over 1,800 individual map amendments have been issued for Salina, remapping the city and surrounding fringe areas was one of FEMA's top priorities in Kansas. Through a cooperative agreement with the Kansas Department of Agriculture, FEMA has initiated a project to update the FIRM for Saline County Kansas. When the study is complete, maps will be available in a countywide format that will provide seamless flood hazard coverage for Salina and Saline County, Kansas. In addition to paper map panels the flood hazard data will also be available in a digital format for use in a Geographic Information System.

The remapping effort proceeded much slower than originally anticipated. This is primarily because of changes in the rules for certifying and recertifying levees made by FEMA following Hurricane Katrina. FEMA delayed releasing any new flood plain maps for official use for any jurisdictions that had not had their levees recertified under FEMA's new certification process. The City of Salina received official notice from FEMA on November 2, 2015 that its levee system has been recertified.

In December 2009, FEMA released new preliminary flood maps. A community meeting was held at the Bicentennial Center in February 2010 to display the new maps, explain the remapping process and answer questions from potentially affected property owners. Of particular concern was the fact that FEMA and their mapping consultant only had a record of 600 of the 1,800 map revisions and amendments that had been made by FEMA to Salina's original 1986 flood maps. Therefore, neither City staff nor FEMA was able to inform property owners of the status of the property on their proposed new maps.

City staff and many citizens expressed concerns about the accuracy of the new maps. The City of Salina decided to file a formal protest of the proposed maps and also submitted numerous appeals on behalf of individual property owners.

FEMA eventually concurred that some of the mapping of levee protected areas was based on flawed methodology and withdrew the proposed maps. FEMA and the Kansas Department of Agriculture agreed to start over with a new consultant and a new mapping methodology. AMEC Foster Wheeler of Topeka, Kansas, the same firm that assisted the City with recertification of its levee system, was selected as the mapping consultant and AMEC is now under contract with the Kansas Department of Agriculture to produce new DFIRMS for Salina and Saline County.

The Kansas Department of Agriculture has been working with FEMA to develop a new scope of work for developing these new DFIRMS for Saline County which will include incorporating data from the Salina levee certification project and developing new "A" zones using 2010 LIDAR data which will provide better topographic data than the previous flood maps that were produced.

Salina's BFEs (Base Flood Elevations) will be based on interior drainage studies / analysis relating to levee certification. The methodology has been approved by FEMA.

A full SOMA (Summary of Map Amendments) list will be provided.

FEMA also plans to produce a number of other non-regulatory map products that can be used to communicate flood risks to citizens.

As part of the remapping process, Salina's 1986 flood plain regulations will need to be reviewed and possibly updated.

Now that the flood control levee has been certified as providing 100 year flood protection for the City, FEMA and the Kansas Department of Agriculture is preparing to release new DFIRM maps for Salina and Saline County.

Projected Time Line

Levee Certification completed	November 2, 2015
Work Map Delivery meeting Informal feedback from staff	November 12, 2015
Work Map Internal Review Period	November 2015-April 2016
Public Review Period	April-May 2016
Public Open House Meeting – w/KDA	May 19, 2016 (Bicentennial Center)
Public Comment Review	May-July 2016
Preliminary Maps released	August 2016
Community Coordination meetings	September 2016
Appeal Period – 90 days *Every stream eligible for appeal **Dependent upon publication date in Federal Register	November 2016-January 2017 (estimated due to FR)
Letter of Final Determination (LFD)	March 2017 (estimated)
New maps go into effect	Fall 2017 (6 months from LFD)

More information about floodplain regulations and flood insurance requirements is available in the Development Services offices, Room 201 of the City-County Building, or online at <http://www.salina-ks.gov/content/18394/18522/18536/22779/20396/default.aspx>